



HEALTH AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

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MEMORANDUM FOR SURGEON GENERAL OF THE ARMY
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE NAVY
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Revised Blood Donor Deferral Guidance for SARS Exposure

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) investigations about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are ongoing. As of July 2003, over 8,000 probable cases of SARS have been reported to the WHO from 31 countries. Through continuing epidemiologic and laboratory research, the CDC has provided updated information on case definitions and SARS-affected areas.

The potential for transmission of SARS through blood and blood products is still unknown. Until more information is known about the epidemiology and pathogenesis of this virus, strict blood donor screening and deferral is imperative to help ensure the safety of our blood inventory.

The Army, Navy, and Air Force Blood Programs will implement this revision as soon as possible, but no later than 31 December 2003. The point of contact for this matter is Lt Col Ruth D. Sylvester, Director, Armed Services Blood Program Office, at DSN 761-8024 or (703) 681-8024, ruth.sylvester@otsg.amedd.army.mil.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ellen P. Embrey", is positioned above the printed name.

Ellen P. Embrey
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Force Health Protection and Readiness)